AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1.-20. (Canceled)

21. (New) A method for transferring at least one of a media file and associated usage rights data from a first user unit to a second user unit, wherein the media file is identifiable by a central interface unit and includes at least one component of image data, audio data, and video data, the method comprising the steps of:

transferring at least one of the media file and the associated usage rights data directly from the first user unit to the second user unit via a communication link between the first and second user units;

limiting access by the first user unit to the media file;

providing access to the second user unit to the media file;

coupling at least one of the first and second user units over a communications network to the central interface unit; and

logging, at the central interface unit, the transfer of at least one of the media file and its associated usage rights data to the second user unit.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of retrieving, by the second unit, either the media file or the associated usage rights data, not transferred from the first user unit to the second user unit from the central interface unit.

23. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the second user unit has a second media file with associated usage rights data, the method further comprising the steps of:

transferring at least one of the second media file and its associated usage rights data from the second user unit to the first user unit;

limiting access by the second user unit to the second media file;

providing access to the first user unit to the second media file;

wherein the logging step further comprises the step of logging the transfer of at least one of the second media file and its associated usage rights data from the second user unit to the first user unit.

24.   (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the transfer of at least one of the first media file and its associated usage rights data to the second user unit is part of a swap transaction conditioned upon the transfer of at least one of the second media file and its associated usage rights data to the first user unit.

25.   (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the second user unit transfers more than one media file to the first unit as part of a swap transaction.

26.   (New) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of generating a dummy media file substituting at least one of the second media file and its associated usage rights data to satisfy the swap transaction conditions.

27.   (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the first and second user unit each has a storage unit, an input buffer and an output buffer, the method further comprising the steps of:

transferring the media file to be transferred from the storage unit of the first user unit (a transferring user unit) to the associated output buffer; and

transferring the media file to be transferred from the output buffer of the transferring user unit to the input buffer of the second user unit (a receiving user unit).

28.   (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the logging step additionally comprises at least one of:

updating a transfer log associated with the transferring user unit to reflect the removal of the media file; and

updating a transfer log associated with the receiving user unit to reflect the addition of the transferred media file.

29.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the steps of:

polling a digital rights management system within the central interface unit by the transferring user unit; and

receiving a command or message from the digital rights management system by the transferring user unit to limit access by the transferring user unit to the transferred media file.

30.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the steps of:

polling a digital rights management system within the central interface unit by the receiving user unit; and

receiving a command or message from the digital rights management system by the receiving user unit to grant to the receiving user unit access to the received media file.

31.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of preventing access to a transferred media file by a receiving user if the digital rights management system has associated the transferred media file with a third user unit.

32.   (New) The method claim 27, further comprising the step of cryptographically associating each transferred digital media file with a receiving user unit.

33.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of transferring the transferred media file from the receiving user unit back to the transferring unit if the transfer is not ratified.

34.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the steps of:

providing a history log for integration into each media file that identifies at least one of previous owners and transfers of the media file; and

synchronizing the media file history log with the logged transfers stored within the central interface unit.

35.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of determining whether the media file is transferred with one or more usage restrictions.

36.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of transferring the transferred media file from the receiving user unit back to the transferring user unit after a predetermined usage restriction condition associated with the transferred media file has been met.

37.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of transferring the transferred media file from the receiving user unit back to the transferring user unit after a predetermined amount of time has expired, or after the receiving user unit has accessed the transferred media file greater than or equal to a predetermined number of occurrences, or if the transfer has not been ratified by the central interface unit, or if the transfer is subsequently cancelled, or if the transfer is not successful.

38.   (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of periodically communicating, by the central interface unit, with individual user units, to synchronize at least one of the media files and the associated usage rights data, if any, stored within each user unit with one or more databases within the central interface unit.

39.   (New) A system for transferring a media file that includes at least one component of image data, audio data, and video data, and associated usage rights data, comprising:

a first user unit configured to store at least one digital media file;

a second user unit configured to store at least one digital media file;

wherein said first and second user units are configured to initiate a communications link between the first and second users units to transfer at least one of a media file or associated usage rights data therebetween;

a central interface unit configured to communicate with at least one of said first and second user units to log the transfer of digital media files;

a first data management unit within said first user unit for limiting access to media files transferred by said first user unit; and

a second data management unit within said second user unit for providing access to media files received by said second user unit.

40.   (New) A computer program product, comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable code embodied therein for transferring at least one of a media file or associated usage rights data from a first user unit to a second user unit wherein the media file is identifiable by a central interface unit and includes at least one component of image data, audio data, and video data, the computer code product comprising:

computer readable program code portions for transferring at least one of the media file and the associated usage rights data from the first user unit to the second user unit over a communication link between the first and second user units;

computer readable program code portions for limiting access by the first user unit to the media file;

computer readable program code portions for providing access to the second user unit to the media file;

computer readable program code portions for coupling at least one of the first and second user units over a communications network to the central interface unit; and

computer readable program code portions for logging, at the central interface unit, the transfer of the media file to the second user unit.

41.   (New) The computer program product of claim 40, stored on a computer readable recording medium.

42. (New) A system comprising a computer processor and a memory coupled to the processor, where the memory is encoded with one or more programs that is configured to perform a method for transferring at least one of a media file and associated usage rights data from a first user unit to a second user unit, wherein the media file is identifiable by a central interface unit and includes at least one component of image data, audio data, and video data, the method comprising the steps of:

transferring at least one of the media file and the associated usage rights data directly from the first user unit to the second user unit over a direct communication link between the first and second user units;

limiting access by the first user unit to the media file;

providing access to the second user unit to the media file;

coupling at least one of the first and second user units over a communications network to the central interface unit; and

logging, at the central interface unit, the transfer of at least one of the media file and its associated usage rights data to the second user unit.